

AIR POUCH

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JUN 12 1956

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: [REDACTED]

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: [REDACTED]

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: Administrative

: [REDACTED] Authority and Responsibility for Issuing Press Releases

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1. The comments which follow are intended to expand upon and clarify previous instructions to [REDACTED] concerning its authority and responsibility to issue press releases. First of all, we believe that a number of considerations suggest the advisability of - if not the necessity for - your handling directly most press queries that may arise within your area of operations. The most important considerations are as follows:

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a. Routine queries made to [REDACTED] and initial releases announcing the loss of a [REDACTED] cannot be referred to Headquarters without prohibitive delays which would tend to arouse curiosity and increase speculation. Such queries require expeditious handling by [REDACTED] using the cover information provided by Headquarters as a guide.

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b. In addition, the detailed circumstances surrounding the loss of a [REDACTED] over friendly territory (precise location, cause, degree of compromise, etc.) will be better known to [REDACTED] than to Headquarters. While the pertinent details of any such incident might be transmitted quickly to Headquarters, it is difficult from our vantage point to prepare a release with any assurance that we have a complete and current grasp of all the facts.

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c. Furthermore, PIO guidance available to [REDACTED] through established contacts (3rd Air Force and/or USAFE) is essential to develop a release which is slanted to satisfy local press inquiries. In short, what is needed is an on-the-spot appraisal by [REDACTED] of what needs to be said and local PIO guidance on how best to say it.

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2. In determining what needs to be said, [REDACTED] should be guided by the [REDACTED] press release of 7 May and the final version of the unclassified cover story - both contained in the Cover Annex of the [REDACTED] Operations Order. Further guidance is contained in the question-answer instruction

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transmitted in [REDACTED] 2209 (OUT 51230), and the Fact Sheet forwarded with [REDACTED] 44. If [REDACTED] feels the need for additional guidance in carrying out the press release responsibilities outlined in more detail below, please advise us of your needs.

3. In line with the thinking expressed in paragraph 1 above, [REDACTED] will have authority and responsibility for preparing press releases required by the following situations:

a. All routine inquiries in the [REDACTED] area of operations.

b. Loss of [REDACTED] over friendly territory (brief press notice announcing loss immediately after such loss is presumed or confirmed), plus any follow-up releases required as a consequence of such an incident. We would, of course, wish to be informed of any political or policy issues resulting from a loss over friendly territory (e.g. compromise of the [REDACTED] reconnaissance equipment) and would take immediate steps to instruct [REDACTED] on the handling of such compromise.

c. Loss of [REDACTED] over hostile territory (brief press notice announcing loss as indicated in the SOP appearing in the [REDACTED] Operations Order). All releases in response to hostile reaction to such an incident will be prepared by Headquarters.

4. [REDACTED] releases covering the above situations should conform to the basic cover guidance referred to in paragraph 2 above. Any situations requiring a departure from or an expansion of the guidance already furnished should be coordinated with Headquarters (e.g. compromise of certain reconnaissance equipment resulting from a loss over friendly territory may require explanations not contained in the unclassified cover story). Whenever time permits, Headquarters desires an opportunity to review intended releases before issuance; in any case, we will require information copies of all releases which may require backstopping in the United States.

5. We would appreciate any comments you have on the above, and welcome any requests you may have for further clarification or cover support.

RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.

Distribution:

1A2 - [REDACTED]

3 - RMB

4 - Cover

5 - Admin

6 - Chrono

7 - Reading

8 - RI (Dummy copy)

RMB/[REDACTED]/ht/7 June 1956

JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
(Releasing)

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SECRET

(Originating)